

Message Text

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E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, WB

SUBJECT: LORENZ ASSESSES PAST YEAR IN BERLIN HOUSE; COMMENTS ON
SCHUETZ'S DECLINE

1. AT MEETING WITH ALLIED SENAT LIAISON OFFICERS JUNE 23
PRESIDENT OF BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND CHAIRMAN OF
BERLIN CDU PETER LORNZ REVIEWED EVERNTS OF PAST YEAR'S BERLIN
LEGISLATIVE SESSION. POINT WHICH STRUCK LORENZ AS MOST
SUPRISING WAS THAT SPD-FDP COALITION HAD HELD TOGETHER FAR
BETTER THAN ANYONE HAD EXPECTED AT TIME OF TISS FORMATION
FOLLWING MARCH 1975 ELECTIONS. LORENZ NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT
THERE CONTINUE TO BE STRINAS WITIN COLATION, AND INDEED
BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT WINGS WITHIN EACH OF COALITION PARTIES,
MAKING IT SOMEWHAT PROBLEMATIC THAT COALITION WILL LAST
ENTIRE FOUR YEAR LEGISLATIVE PERIOD.

2. SPECULATING ON REASONS FOR COALITION'S SUCCESS LORENZ
EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT THIS WAS DUE LARGELY TO GOVERNING
MAYOR SCHUETZJS WILLINGNESS TO GIVE IN TO FDP ON MOST
IMPORTANT ISSUES WHENEVER PUSH HAD COME TO SHOVE. LOOKING
AT THIS EVEN FROM OPPOSITION VIEWPOINT, LORENZ SAID IT CLEAR
THAT SCHUETZJS REPEATED CONCESSIONS TO HIS JUNIOR COALTION
PARTNER HAD NOT GONE OVER WELL WITHIN SPD AND HAD
CONTRIBUED TO SCHUETZ'S OWN LOSS OF STRENGTH WITHIN PARTY.
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3. SCHUETZ'S DECLINE AS POLITICAL LEADER WAS IN LORENZ'S OPINION SECOND MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENT OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION. REFLECTING ON GOVERNING MAYOR'S POLITICALLY WEAKENED STATE, LORENZ MENTIONED RUMOR MAKING ROUNDS WITHIN SPD(WHICH MISSION HAS ALSO RECENTLY HEARD FROM OTHER SOURCES) THAT SCHUETZ MAY STEP DOWN AFTER OCTOBER NATIONAL ELECTIONS AND BE REPLACED BY SPD BUNDESTAG DEPUTY MARIA SCHLEI.

4. REASONS FOR SCHUETZ'S LOSS OF PRESTIGE, ACCORDING TO LORENZ, INCLUDE IN ADDITION TO HIS ALL TOO FREQUENT ACQUIESCENCE TO FDP DEMANDS, CONTINUING SERIES OF SCANDALS IN CITY ADMINISTRATION(E.G., KPM AFFAIR), SENAT BLUNDERS DURING HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DEBATES ON QUESTIONS OF NATIONAL STIFTUNG (USBERLIN 833)) AND DOUBLE INVITATIONS POLICIES,AND PARTY'S STEADY LEFTWARD DRIFT. LORENZ CONTENDED THAT SCHUETZ HAS LOST HIS HOLD OVER THE PARTY, LEFTWING HAS GAINED GROUND BY USING HARRY RISTOCK AS AN ACCEPTABLE FRONT MAN BEHIND WHOM " REAL LEFT WINGERS" CAN BUILD UP SUPPORT. (DEVELOPING LATTER POINT LORENZ SAID HE FELT SPD LEFT WING HAD BEEN GREATLY HELPED WHEN COMPETENT YOUNG SPD POLITICIANS LIKE JUERGEN GRIMMING ASSOCIATED WITH PARTY'S RIGHT WING HAD BECOME INVOLVED IN CITY ADMINISTRATION SCANDALS).

5. LORENZ HAD PREDICATABLY HIGH PRAISE FOR HIS OWN PARTY'S PERFORMANCE. HE OBSERVED WITH PRIDE THAT CDU HAD OFFERED AGGRESSIVE YET CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION IN HOUSE, AS WITNESSED BY FAR GREATER NUMBER OF " GROSSE ANFRAGE" DURING THIS SESSION AS OPPOSED TO PREVIOUS YEARS. HE ALSO NOTED WITH SOME SATISFACTION THAT A NUMBER OF CDU PROPOSALS MADE DURING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES HAD SUBSEQUENTLY APPEARED AS PART OF SENATE PROGRAMS IN AREAS LIKE CITY PLANNING AND BUILDING PROGRAMS.

6. COMMENT: THERE IS A GOOD MEASURE OF SELF-LAUDATORY COMMENT AND WISHFUL THINKING IN LORENZ'S REMARKS. NONETHELESS, HE IS IN POSITION TO HAVE REASONABLY GOOD OVERVIEW OF CURRENT BERLIN POLITICAL SITUATION. GOVERNING MAYOR'S POLITICAL STAR HAS DIMMED PERCEPTIBLY IN PAST MONTHS.

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KALUS SCHUETZ HAS BEEN GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN FOR NINE YEARS. DURING THAT PERIOD SPD HAS SLOWLY LOST POPULARITY WITH VOTERS AND ITS PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IN BERLIN HOUSE. FOR MOST OF THAT PERIOD, HOWEVER, SCHUETZ WAS ABLE TO RIDE WAVE OF PERSONAL POPULARITY WHICH WAS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THAT OF HIS PARTY. PAST YEAR HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY ROUGH ONE HOWEVER. IN SEPTEMBER 1975 SCHUETZ WAS HOSPITALIZED

TO HAVE A SEVERE SWELLING REMOVED FROM THE RIGHT SIDE OF
HIS FACE. MOE THANT ONCE IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED HIS HEALTH
IS NOTWHAT IT SHOULD BE. POLITICALLY HE HAS BEEN UNDER
GREATER AMOUNT OF PRESSUR THAN ONE WULD NORMALLY EXPECT
IN FIRST YEAR FOLLOWING AN ELECTION. MORE THAN A FEW
POLITICAL OBSERVERS, INCLUDING SOME FARILY CLOSE TO THE
GOVERNING MAYOR, HAVE COMMENTED PRIVATELY ON APPARENT
LOSS OF WILL TO CONTINUE GOVERNING CITY. SCHUETZ PROBABLY
WOULD WELCOME A CHANGE OFSCENERY. REAL QUESTION REMAINS,
FOR GOVERNING MAYOR AND SPD, WHERE CAN HE GO FROM HERE
WITHOUT LOSING FACE?
GEORGE

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